
Exporter or Shipper Responsibilities Related to the Export Certification of Plants and Plant Products

The following exporter responsibilities are as stated in USDA-APHIS-PPQ's Export Certification Manual (ECM), 09/2004-01 Second Edition. The exporter responsibilities have been excerpted from the ECM for the purpose of providing them to exporters for their information and knowledge.

1. Apply, in writing, for the inspection and certification of plants and plant products offered for export. Federal plant export certificates can be issued at the point of origin, at a port where the shipment will transit, or at the actual port of export. PPQ Form 572, Application for Inspection and Certification of Domestic Plants and Plant Products for Export, can be requested from the nearest ACO office or downloaded from the following web site address:

[<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/forms>](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/forms)

2. Contact an Accredited Certification Official (ACO) far enough in advance of the shipping or loading dates. This advance notification provides for reviewing phytosanitary import requirements and sampling, inspecting, testing, and any other activity required to meet those import requirements in advance of the anticipate shipping or loading dates and within any specified time limits. Exporters **must** be aware of any time limit foreign countries specify for the period between date of inspection or date of issue and shipping date. If specified by a foreign country, then the time limit between inspection and exportation is listed in the export summary under the definition of phytosanitary certificate. If a time limit is **not** specified in the export summary, then the general time limit for inspections is **not** more than 30 days before export.
3. Provide all necessary documentation including import permits, bills of lading, manifests, shipping invoices, foreign phytosanitary certificates, and inspection certificates. It is the exporter's responsibility to provide official documents stating import requirements if they differ from those in the receiving country's export summary. Official documents may be an import permit, special authorization, or recent correspondence from the plant protection organization of the foreign country, which takes precedence over the information contained in the export summary.

Exporters are responsible for ensuring official documents are translated into English if presented to ACOs in a language other than English. Bilingual information is acceptable as long as one

of the languages is English. If an ACO or other capable source **cannot** confidently translate an official document, then be advised that ACOs **cannot** proceed until they have an English translation certified in writing as accurate.



Exporters frequently present letters of credit from their contacts in the foreign country to indicate that plant quarantine regulations have been changed. Letters of credit are strictly fiduciary documents. For the purposes of phytosanitary certification, letters of credit **cannot** be considered official notifications of changes or exceptions to plant quarantine regulations, which **must** come from the plant protection organizations of foreign countries.

4. Make the plants or plant products available for inspection. Shipments **cannot** be inspected on board aircraft or ships, or in the holds of vessels. The plants or plant products **must** be accessible to the ACO so that the official can verify and inspect the material described on the application or partially completed Federal plant export certificate. In addition, other shipping documents should be marked or stamped to prevent the shipment from being loaded before the inspection is conducted. The exporter is further responsible for providing the labor to open and close packages for inspection and for providing adequate facilities to perform the inspection. Such facilities include supplies, equipment, and proper lighting required for an efficient inspection before certification.
5. Provide for any required treatments, reconditioning, or other actions to meet the import requirements of the foreign country.
6. Export **only** those plants or plant products that have been properly inspected and certified under a Federal plant export certificate.
7. Safeguard the certified shipment from infestation between the date the shipment was certified and the actual shipping date, and ensure that the certified shipment departs within the specified time limits of the importing country.
8. Comply with U.S. export control regulations. The Federal government controls the exportation of U.S. goods to all foreign countries. The Department of Commerce is the authority for licensing most items for export. Other Federal agencies such as the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Federal Grain Inspection Service handle the certification for specific products.

For further information, exporters may contact the Office of Export Control, Bureau of International Commerce, Department of Commerce at the following web site address:

[<http://www.trade.gov/td/tic/>](http://www.trade.gov/td/tic/)